



'NOW I'M ALWAYS IN PAIN'

Disabled man deported to Jamaica cannot afford doctors or medicines
 >>Page 3



PROFITS FROM DEPORTATIONS

There's cash aplenty for firms doing the Tories' dirty work
 >>Page 17

Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2692 | 19 - 25 February 2020 | socialistworker.co.uk

TIME TO JOIN RESISTANCE



UNIVERSITY STRIKERS



CLIMATE STRIKERS

STEP UP THE FIGHT

● BACK UNIVERSITY STRIKES
 ● BUILD CLIMATE REBELLION

CLIMATE

Tories abandon people devastated by the floods

THE DAMAGE caused by the floods across Britain has exposed the total failure to provide for people in danger. Climate change makes floods more likely—yet the Tories are abandoning whole towns. Pontypridd in South Wales felt the full force of the storm. Residents spoke to Socialist Worker.

>>Page 20

WOMEN'S LIBERATION



A landmark in fight against oppression

THERE WAS a “real buzz of excitement” 50 years ago this month when the first national Women's Liberation conference was held in Ruskin College, Oxford.

It helped to boost struggles for women's liberation—and saw debates and disagreements about how to fight for it.

>>Pages 14&15

LEFT

Being 'too woke' is not one of the left's problems

PUB BORES bemoaning political correctness is as British as covering up royal child abuse.

What's more surprising is that whining about “identity politics gone mad” is the new contrarian wisdom seeping through bits of the left.

>>Page 15



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Extensive preparations have already been carried out for the budget and they will continue at pace'

A spokesman for the PM says there will be no problems delivering a budget under new Chancellor Rishi Sunak

'To hear this from them shows that they have not been candid with us at all and takes us back to those terrible days when they were trying to kick this all under the carpet'

Charlotte Charles, mother of Harry Dunn, criticises the government following reports her son's killer was a spy with the CIA

'Where's Boris? Where's the help?'

Flood victim in Pontypridd, South Wales looks for government help

'We can't protect everyone'

Environment Secretary George Eustice isn't rushing to offer that help



British backs war crimes in Yemen after 31 killed in raid

SAUDI Arabian airstrikes killed at least 32 civilians last Saturday in brutal revenge for a military setback.

This latest horror in the five-year war was carried out by the Saudi forces that are backed by Britain and the US.

It followed the shooting down of a Saudi Tornado jet aircraft by Houthi rebels the day before.

Those targeted by the Saudi airstrike included children who had gathered around the wreckage of the aircraft as well as families in nearby homes.

Medical teams said it was hard to reach the dozens of wounded people as Saudi jets continued to circle the area, threatening a "double tap" strike against first responders.

Since the war began in



Saudi airforce jets bombed Yemen

March 2015, an estimated 100,000 Yemenis have been killed.

Saudi bombings, including against homes, hospitals, schools, buses and weddings, are responsible for two thirds of Yemen's civilian casualties.

Around ten million

Yemenis are living on the brink of famine.

The aid group Save the Children estimated that at least 75,000 Yemeni children under the age of five have starved to death since the war began.

Britain has continued to

supply equipment for the Saudi war machine.

But in June last year the Court of Appeal ruled that British arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen are unlawful.

The court said it was "irrational and therefore unlawful" for the government to have granted licences without making any assessment as to whether violations of international humanitarian law had taken place.

As a result the government has to retake all decisions to export arms to Saudi in accordance with the law.

But eight months later this process has not been completed.

On 16 January the government confirmed that there is still a licence for arms firm Raytheon UK to export to Saudi Arabia.

IMAGINE HAVING wallpaper as rare as the 19th-century Chinese wallpaper which adorns the Yellow Drawing Room in the Buckingham Palace. It is currently being removed piece by piece amid fears that vibrations from nearby renovations would damage it. It was hung in the drawing room after queen Mary discovered it in a cupboard at Brighton Pavilion.



Nice wallpaper

Furniture worth almost £28,000 has been purchased by parliamentary authorities for an atrium in Portcullis House, it has emerged. New sofas, chairs and tables appeared in the Westminster office building on Monday morning.

Just who did pay for Johnson's holiday?

A wealthy tycoon has denied he paid for Boris Johnson's £15,000 New Year jaunt to the Caribbean. Johnson declared the freebie trip in the latest Commons register of interests.

But David Ross insisted he didn't actually pay for the villa, he just helped arrange it with a phone call.

That suggests that the prime minister's declaration was inaccurate, which could earn him a serious reprimand from parliament. Though the last three times he got his register of interests wrong nothing happened.

The private holiday lasted from Boxing Day



Ross didn't pay for holiday

to 5 January according to the register entry, with the villa reportedly including three staff members.

The prime minister listed the excursion as a "benefit in kind" from David Ross. "Accommodation for a private holiday for my partner and me, value £15,000."

Why did Andrew befriend another billionaire rapist?

PRINCE Andrew brazenly "groped girls" during parties while staying at child abuser Jeffrey Epstein's private island.

Denise George, attorney general of the US Virgin Islands, said staff reported that Andrew made no attempt to hide his antics on the disgraced financier's private Caribbean island.

George is taking legal action against the dead paedophile's estate in a bid to stop his lawyers from "hiding" his assets and "covering up" his crimes.

Meanwhile a class action lawsuit claims that Peter Nygard lured "young, impressionable, and often impoverished



Peter Nygard

children and women" to his Bahamas property with cash payments and promises of modelling opportunities, only to then "assault, rape, and sodomize them".

He also was a friend of Prince Andrew who once stayed on the island.

The chancellor is a banker

WHO IS Rishi Sunak?

The new Tory chancellor went to illustrious private school Winchester College before studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford and then gaining an MBA from Stanford University.

It was there he met his wife Akshata Murthy, the daughter of billionaire NR Narayana Murthy.

Sunak worked in the City for Goldman Sachs and then for the hedge fund TCI Fund Management.

Quite how much he made out of the financial crisis is unknown. He left in November 2009 to join other former colleagues at new hedge fund firm Theleme Partners

Sunak was also a director of investment firm Catamaran Ventures owned by his father in law.



Alok Sharma

New business secretary gets climate conference

ALOK SHARMA is the new business secretary and COP26 president. Sharma will oversee the climate conference in Glasgow later this year

As international development secretary, Sharma announced that Britain will partner with Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda to design a new facility to support a range of "environmentally-friendly" infrastructure projects. Around £2 billion in energy deals were agreed.

But 90 percent were for fossil fuels.

In parliament he only voted positively on two out of 13 climate-related votes.

Having originally claimed that "Heathrow would inflict huge damage to the environment and to the quality of life of millions of people."

He has since welcomed the expansion, claiming that it would help to "drive the nation's economic powerhouse".

Get in touch with Socialist Worker



Email reports@socialistworker.co.uk
Web www.socialistworker.co.uk
Facebook "Socialist Worker (Britain)"
Twitter @socialistworker



Newsdesk
020 7840 5656
Circulation
020 7840 5601



Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 74955
London
E16 9EJ

'I am in constant pain'—deported man speaks out

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE TORIES are preparing for further mass deportations to Jamaica after 17 people were forcibly removed on a charter flight last week.

The Home Office had wanted to deport at least 50 people, but was blocked by a last-minute legal order. It now wants to deport those who did not go last week.

Deportations wreck people's lives. Rayan Crawford, a disabled man who was one of the 17 people deported to Jamaica, says he's now living in "constant pain" because he doesn't have access to medication.

He suffers from Blount Disease, a rare bone condition, and inflammatory arthritis.

Rayan told Socialist Worker, "My joints have swelled up because there is no free health care and no free medication."

"I'm going to have to see the doctor, but in Jamaica you have to have money for everything."

Rayan, who came to Britain aged 12, lived in Tower Hamlets in east London with his partner Jana and their two sons.

"No one who left a country when they're 12 years old is going to have a house or other stuff to survive if they go back," he said.

Temporary

Rayan is now living in poverty with his sister and their children. Even that is "only temporary," he explained. "She's got the children, and I'm sleeping on a couch."

"I have no money and no work and support is non-existent."

Rayan had indefinite leave to remain in Britain until the Home Office sent him a deportation order in March 2018. He was serving a short prison sentence for a minor burglary offence at the time. This meant he



RAYAN HAS received so formal support since being deported

had to sign on with immigration officials every Monday.

Then, on 27 January, Rayan went to the appointment and "was told, 'We're detaining you'."

He said that detention and deportation is "just like being kidnapped".

"You're sitting in the holding cell for about seven hours waiting for the bus to take you to the detention centre," he said. "You don't know where you are or when you will be deported."

Airport

After two weeks in Brooke House detention centre near London Gatwick Airport, Rayan was taken to Doncaster Sheffield Airport in the early hours of last Monday.

"You're in the room and about ten big guys come running in, put you in handcuffs and put you on a coach to the airport," he said.

"You're on there for 11 hours with guys sat next to you."

"You're then in the plane for ten hours, just constantly sitting for hours. I was in so much back pain."

The Tories use deportations to ramp up racism. Boris Johnson's press secretary dismissed outrage over the charter flight as the preoccupation of the "Westminster bubble".

By lying that those deported were "dangerous criminals" Johnson wants to build support for a law and order crackdown.

Ordinary people have been at the forefront of resisting deportations.

Hundreds of largely black, working class people defied the cops and blocked Whitehall twice in the run-up to the charter flight last week. There need to be more protests.

Activists must fight to stop all deportations and end Britain's racist immigration system.

On other pages...

Dosh for deportations—how private firms cash in >>Page 17

Families campaign for return

FAMILIES OF people on the Jamaica deportation flight—or those locked up in detention—are fighting to bring them to safety.

Jana has said she will campaign to bring back her partner Rayan Crawford, one of the 17 people who was deported last week.

She told Socialist Worker that it's had a "shocking" impact on her and their two children, aged 12 and three.

Jana said one of the hardest things has been having "to lie to loved ones".

"I can stay strong and hide in the bathroom and cry, but it's difficult with the children," she said.

Daddy

"I said to my son, 'Come and sleep with mummy. He said, 'No, it's daddy's side of the bed.' When he asked me where daddy was the next morning, I had to lie and say he had left early."

Supporters of Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) in Tower Hamlets are organising to help get Rayan home.

Meanwhile, another man, Christopher, remains locked up in Harmondsworth immigration detention centre near London Heathrow Airport (see page 17).

His deportation was stopped by a last minute court order, but he could still be put on a flight at any time.

His partner Margaret was out campaigning with the south London SUTR group last week to demand his release.

She told Socialist Worker, "I want them out of detention. I want them home. I want the deportation order taken off."

Longer version online at bit.ly/JanaStory

Stand Up To Racism protests on UN anti-racism day

Saturday 21 March, London and Glasgow

- No to Islamophobia & antisemitism
- Justice for Windrush
- Refugees welcome
- Build a global movement



standuptoracism.org.uk

Tories push racist rules

THE TORY government has agreed to press ahead with plans to make Britain's immigration rules even more brutal.

A cabinet meeting last week backed an "Australian-style points-based system" after Britain fully leaves the European Union (EU) in January 2021.

Home secretary Priti Patel is due to announce details of the plans which are set to be rolled out from early next year.

The decision comes ahead of a new Immigration Bill.

This is expected to be put before parliament

in March. It will likely create a false division between "high" and "low" skilled migrants.

Those deemed to be "low skilled" would only be able to come to Britain on a temporary visa. They would also be denied the right to bring family members here.

Any division in the working class makes it harder to fight the Tories and the bosses.

Anti-racists must campaign against the Immigration Bill and the "points-based system".

We must fight to defend and extend free movement.



Priti Patel

IN THIS WEEK

1848

The Communist Manifesto published

KARL MARX and Frederick Engels publish their manifesto that argues that workers can transform society.

It's estimated that it has sold around 500 million copies, making it one of the best-selling books of all time.



Student strikers call for climate action now

Anger at government inaction ran through protests, report **Sarah Bates** and **Sophie Squire**

SCHOOL STUDENTS marked their ninth strike for the climate last Friday with angry demonstrations across Britain.

“This is more important than missing one day of classes,” school student Elsie told Socialist Worker on the London action.

“Throughout history it’s continuous action that has made a change—we can’t wait, we have ten years left.”

Some locations saw sizeable turnouts, with 500 students massing in Bristol, 300 in Glasgow, 200 in Manchester and 150 in Portsmouth.

Around 1,000 students joined the London mobilisation, which snaked through much of Whitehall and passed the Home Office and the Department for Education.

Many students wanted to talk about the fear of a future riddled by climate chaos. Lucas told Socialist Worker, “This is our future.”

“Some people are getting it—but we need more people to be worried about what’s going on.”

Emily had been on the first climate strike in London in February 2019.

She said students had to fight for “the government to put its promises into action—I want emissions from big companies to be more controlled.”

“There’s a lot of anger at the older generation but a lot of people didn’t

BACK STORY

School students joined a ninth climate strike last Friday

- The action took place one year after the first school climate strike in Britain last February
- Students held angry protests demanding the Tories stop their inaction over climate change
- The London protest was much smaller than previous school climate demonstrations
- The fight to stop catastrophic climate change has to involve wider layers of activists

realise what they were doing,” she said. “Either way, this is our last chance.”

Anger at government inaction was a consistent theme.

“Consumers and producers are to blame—but a government needs to make a change,” said Isobel.

Eda said it was important to continue striking because “you get the sense that your voices are being heard—and you’re not the only one”.

Angry chants erupted through the crowd when the march reached the Home Office, and a banner slamming the government’s recent



SCHOOL STRIKERS in Bradford (above) and Portsmouth (above, right)

PICTURES: NEIL TERRY AND JON WOODS

deportations was unfurled.

Marchers chanted, “One struggle, one fight, open borders, climate strike.”

Striker Sean said, “The deportations shows disdain for migrants, and disdain for the working class and everyone.”

“It’s that sort of attitude that’s caused the climate crisis.”

Some strikers carried placards demanding justice for refugees.

“If the climate continues the way it is, we’re all going to be climate refugees and need help at some point,” said Eda. The police were more aggressive than they have been

in previous strikes—and intimidated strikers off roads.

Outside Downing Street, one cop pulled a teenager off a wall by their leg.

One year on from the first climate strike in Britain, the strike in London was much smaller than other demonstrations.

Isla said this may be because, “People don’t think it’s going to make a difference because it’s just a march’ but it’s more about having a presence.”

The battle against climate catastrophe is too important to let the school students fight alone.

To make an even bigger impact they need to be joined by wider layers of activists.

The upcoming global climate strike day—likely to be 4 April—will be a critical opportunity for workers to join student strikers on the street and fight for our planet.

As striker Ellie said, “We can’t say that someone else should do it—we need to do it. We won’t stop until something changes.”

On other pages...

Fury after floods cause chaos across Britain >>> **Page 20**

FIGURE IT OUT

- 2** degrees—scientists agree we need to limit global temperature rises to 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels
- 5** millimetres—the global mean sea level rise per year between May 2014 and May 2019
- 3.2** millimetres is the average rise of sea levels since 1993. The figure was 4mm in 2007-16

Union members join march

PCS union members from a key government department joined student strikers in London.

Trade unionists with a banner from the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Beis) branch marched.

Workers at Beis and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs were



A PCS union flag

joined by members of the Campaign against Climate Change.

The next climate strike is on Friday 13 March—and trade unionists should organise solidarity in their workplaces.

The 20 September strike last year saw unprecedented levels of workers’ action over climate change.

Workers need to unite with students to defy Tory intransigence on the issue.

Slash emissions to deal with rising temperature

LAST MONTH was the hottest January since records began, with average temperatures their highest in 141 years.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said that the average global land and ocean surface temperature was 2.5 percent above the 20th century average.

It followed an unusually hot 2019, which was the second hottest year on record.

The news was revealed last week, shortly before it was revealed that temperatures in the Antarctic climbed to more than 20 degrees for the first time.

These types of temperature rises are disastrous for the climate.

Some 195 countries agreed at the United Nations talks in 2015 to attempt to limit global temperature rise to 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

But action is far too slow to clamp down on greenhouse gas emissions.

And all the while temperatures continue to climb.



EMERGENCY SUMMITS

The Campaign against Climate Change and others are holding ‘climate emergency summits’ to organise action across Britain. Everyone is welcome

- Sat 29 Feb—Bristol bit.ly/BristolSummit
- Sat 29 Feb—Manchester bit.ly/MancSummit
- Sat 7 March—Sheffield bit.ly/SheffSummit
- Sat 14 March—East London bit.ly/ELonSummit
- For more information and campaign materials, or to get involved in activities go to campaigncc.org



A climate striker in Nairobi, Kenya

PICTURE: @LIZWATHUTU/TWITTER

Climate delayers and deniers in governments and fossil fuel corporations are powering this climate crisis.

It will be critical to keep piling the pressure on them to win the change we need to stop catastrophic climate change.

Join the Extinction Rebellion march, Saturday 22 February, 1pm. Assemble Russell Square, London WC1B 5BG. Go to rebellion.earth

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

EUGENICS SCANDAL EXPOSES TORY BIGOTRY

ANDREW Sabisky always dreamed it was his destiny that one day he would work at 10 Downing Street. And that day was last Monday.

The self-described super-forecaster didn’t see that coming.

Sabisky is a racist, misogynist follower of eugenics. He believes black people are less intelligent than white people. He holds other rotten, reactionary ideas on most subjects.

Eugenics is the idea that a population can be genetically purified by removing certain “inferior” groups from the gene pool.

The Sabisky scandal shows what these filth actually think.

His pro-rape bigotry included suggesting enforcing the uptake of contraception to stop unplanned pregnancies “creating a permanent underclass”.

Sabisky was hired by Johnson’s key adviser Dominic Cummings in his quest for “weirdos”.

Cummings is also a fan of eugenics. The outsider-in-chief was educated at the posh private Durham School and Oxford university, and has married into yet more wealth. That lets him

sit on a farm and read Bismark and fantasise about how eugenics could transform the NHS.

Cummings claimed with eugenics, “We will soon be able to re-make human nature itself.” Presumably he followed this up with a hollow laugh as wolves screeched in the background.

In his own way Johnson agrees. When whittering about IQ tests he argued, “The harder you shake the pack, the easier it will be for some cornflakes to get to the top.”

That last rather odd sentence is an insight into the reality of the supposed radicalism of the current Tory leaders. According to Johnson, poor people—or as

he described them, the “bottom cornflakes”—are poor because they are stupid.

He says that “some measure of inequality is essential” because it’s great for the economy.

The self-styled disruption is as fake as Johnson positioning himself as anti-establishment.

Shaking things up means as much change as possible for their class in general and their mates in particular.

All the tedious rules, and taxes that get in the way of the rich need to be swept aside.

But importantly this isn’t fascism or even the road to fascism.

Instead the current scandal shows that some fairly gross but very old ideas lie at the heart of ruling class thought.

While pulling tropes out of the Donald Trump playbook of bigotry, at heart Johnson is a Tory.

The racism has the tricks of the new alt right, but it is old dreams of hierarchy and empire that fan its flames.

The other thing the scandal shows is that for all the arrogant strutting and bravado that Tories aren’t guaranteed to get their own way. Their plans can fall apart.

“**The scandal exposes some old ideas lie at the heart of ruling class thought**”

COME OUT AND FIGHT

FACED WITH a vicious Tory government, we need to step up the fightback outside parliament urgently.

That’s why it is so good to see university workers kick off a programme of 14 days of strikes on Thursday (see pages 10&11).

It is the first national strike under the new Tory government—and could be a focal point for those who want to fight.

The most impressive sustained resistance we’ve seen recently has come from the school climate

strikers and Extinction Rebellion’s (XR) actions.

In the middle of the first four days of university walkouts, XR will march through London on Saturday. And the group has announced its next rebellion for 23 May.

We need more people taking action across Britain—over climate change, deportations, austerity and the bosses going on the offensive.

The left has to choose where to focus its energies. It can throw

itself into phone banking for one uninspiring Labour leadership candidate or another.

And then it can burrow away inside the party for the next five years, waiting for a Labour government to come along.

Or we can take inspiration from the fightbacks on the streets, workplaces and campuses that are taking place and spread the fighting. That’s where working class people’s power lies to take on the Tories and bosses wrecking the planet and our lives.



London school strikers take on Tories’ anti-migrant racism

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Breakfast in

Sign up to our morning newsletter Breakfast in Red and get the latest news every day.

For updates and analysis on the stories that matter go to socialistworker.co.uk/breakfastinred

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Coronavirus shows capitalism is sick

IT IS still too early to say how serious an epidemic Covid-19—as the latest coronavirus outbreak is now known—will prove to be.

It has already killed far more people than the 2002-3 Sars pandemic, caused by another coronavirus.

But what's certain is that Covid-19 has acted like an X-ray revealing the changing structure of the world economy.

Sars also originated in China, but the Chinese economy is four times the size it was in 2002-3.

Covid-19 has paralysed the second biggest economy in the world. The Chinese government decreed that last week people would return to work after an extended New Year holiday. But on Wednesday last week passenger traffic in China was down 85 percent compared to the same day last year.

The head of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China estimates that economic growth there in the first quarter of 2020 will fall to 2 percent. That's a third of the 6.4 percent growth rate in the same quarter of 2019.

China is the world's biggest exporter and the biggest importer of raw materials. So a slowdown there will have a big impact on global supply and demand for goods and services.

Chinese traders are cutting their orders for goods as diverse as copper and gas. China is starting to import live chickens from the US to make up for domestic animals that can't be fed because of travel restrictions.

But it is on the supply side that the impact is likely to be most severe.

China's ascent to the biggest manufacturing economy in the world was part of a global restructuring of production. Northern transnational corporations developed global production networks outsourcing labour-intensive assembly particularly to east and south east Asia.

The classic example is the Taiwanese firm Foxconn, which employs over a million workers to assemble Apple products in China.

The Chinese government is trying to upgrade the economy technologically. It wants high-value activities such as research and development—which northern transnational corporations keep in their home regions—to take place in China.

China now produces 30 percent of global exports of electrical and electronic components. The major Asian economies, along with the US, are also heavily dependent on Chinese exports of machinery and transport equipment.

According to the Financial Times newspaper, Wuhan province where Covid-19 originated "has emerged as a hub for China's booming cars parts and accessories exports, a sector that has tripled in the last decade while engine and motor exports have risen four times".

Doldrums

The manufacturing industry was already in the doldrums worldwide.

But the car industry is also vulnerable because of its dependence on global supply chains.

As a Financial Times columnist noted, the big car firms were already in trouble. "Dieselgate", the uncertain future of the internal combustion engine, the rise of electric vehicles, the trade barriers of Brexit... and the trade wars waged from the White House.

"All these have contributed to the industrial recession in Europe and America."

Covid-19 may indeed open a new front in the trade war between the US and China. The US medical supply chain relies on Chinese suppliers for finished drugs, drug components and medical supplies such as the face masks now so much in demand.

"This is a wake-up call for an issue that has been latent for many years but is critical to US economic and national security," Donald Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro said last week.

So Covid-19 doesn't just show the effects of globalisation—our physical vulnerability to the planetary spread of diseases and economic dependence on global supply chains.

It may prompt further efforts at what is being called "de-globalisation"—bringing production back to the home regions of the advanced economies. Finally, it sheds more light on the unhealthy condition of contemporary capitalism.



STRIKERS WERE in a buoyant mood in Newham, east London

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Sixth form teachers set to fight on over pay and funding

by SADIE ROBINSON

WORKERS AT sixth form colleges across England braved cold, rain, hail and even blizzards last Wednesday to strike for more pay and funding for education.

It was the fourth walkout in the campaign by NEU union members. They plan further strikes next Thursday and on 10 March.

"It's going really well," said Rob Behan, an NEU rep at Newham Sixth Form College in east London. "All classes are cancelled because of the strike."

Attacks on funding have seen cuts to pay, jobs, courses and support services for students—while workloads and stress levels rise.

Savage

Striker Neil from the north west of England said these savage attacks are driving more people to fight back.

"Two years ago I wouldn't have really expected us to pass the turnout threshold in a strike ballot," he said.

"But over time we've seen a complete degradation of the job. What we've seen nationally is students doing GCSE resits having their hours cut.

"Courses that should be done in four hours a week are being done in as little as two.

"People have seen what's

gone on, and I've seen people on the picket line who I would never have expected to see."

Passing drivers tooted their horns in support as strikers gathered on the picket line in Newham.

"I'm out here in the cold for the sake of my students," striker Elaine told Socialist Worker.

"Students with extra needs used to get support in class. Now they don't have it.

"As a teacher you feel bad so you ask them to see you at lunchtime or after school to try and help. It means you are



Strikers' two demands

working longer." Striker and chemistry teacher Francisco added that pay is a big issue.

"It's not like we want loads of money, we just want an end to the pay cuts," he said.

"People might leave or not even go into teaching in the first place because of the pay."

And Caroline, who works with students with special educational needs, added, "The government has got billions to spend on HS2, but no money for education."

Strikers complained of students being "under-hours"—not getting the teaching hours they should receive.

Easter

"They have told students to come in during the Easter break to do workshops to get around it," said one picket.

"But that won't happen because students have other things to do.

"Also they are trying to shorten the lesson times and get teachers to teach more lessons.

So students get less but teachers work more. It's just a squish."

Wednesday's strike involved 34 sixth form colleges—over a third of the total.

And action later this year could be even bigger.

Send messages of support to jean.evanson@neu.org.uk Join the central London rally. Go to **Sixth Form Strike Rally—27 February** on Facebook

Hopeful about reballot

THE NEU union plans to reballot its members in all 68 sixth form colleges for strikes after half term.

Some 84 percent of members backed strikes in a ballot last year. So far indicative ballots have delivered strong votes.

Elaine said, "There's no alternative to striking—we can't give up now.

"And now that Boris Johnson has won a big majority, things could get worse."

Neil said a rally and lobby of parliament on 27 February, the

next strike day, matters because "it's important to realise that you're not alone".

The action can also help pile pressure on the government, and is a chance to demand solidarity from the wider union movement.

"I absolutely think we can win," said Francisco. "We need to get more attention.

"And it isn't only sixth form teachers suffering—there are lots of people who have problems.

If they see us striking, they might take some action too."

Divisions tear through Labour on the eve of leadership vote

As members begin voting for the next Labour leader this week, debates about transphobia, Palestine solidarity and the party's election defeat are raging, reports Nick Clark

THE LABOUR Party's leadership campaign has become the focus for arguments over trans rights, after two candidates backed a statement opposing transphobia.

Opponents of extending trans rights attacked Lisa Nandy and Rebecca Long-Bailey after the two leadership candidates supported a statement from Labour Campaign for Trans Rights.

The statement rightly called on candidates to "respect trans people as their self-declared gender, and to ensure that Labour is an inclusive environment for trans people."

"Accept that trans women are women, trans men are men, and non-binary people are non-binary. Accept that there is no material conflict between trans rights and women's rights, and that all trans women are subject to misogyny."

It then called on them to "organise and fight against transphobic organisations such as Woman's Place UK, LGB Alliance and other trans-exclusionist hate groups," and "Support the expulsion from the Labour Party of those who express bigoted, transphobic views."

In response, Woman's Place UK (WPUK) founder Ruth Serwotka wrote to Nandy to deny that her organisation was transphobic.

"In fact, we are a women's rights organisation committed, among other things, to upholding current sex discrimination and equality law as set out in the Equality Act (2010), including upholding protections for trans people," she wrote.

Yet WPUK was set up to oppose changes to the Gender Recognition Act that would make it easier for trans people to self-identify.

Its five demands focus on the "impact" that self-declaration would supposedly have on women's only spaces, or monitoring the gender pay gap.

Demands

Such demands are based on the transphobic argument that trans women pose a threat to the rights of those biologically born female.

They are used to deny that trans women are women, and to attempt to exclude them from spaces such as women's toilets and women's refuges.

Long-Bailey rightly rejected arguments that suggest trans people pose a threat to women's rights and safety. "I support the right to self-ID," she said. "As a party you would expect us to be at the vanguard of tackling that transphobic behaviour." She added, "There is no conflict between rights of women and the protection of women, and



THOUSANDS JOINED trans pride in London last year

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

safety in particular places, and trans rights."

Opponents of the Labour Party—and of trans rights—sided with WPUK to attack the left. Much of the right is delighted at the prospect of infighting among the left that blunts the resistance to the Tories.

There is a difference between people who actively promote transphobia, and those with differing views or questions on gender and sexism.

It's a mistake to deal with the latter with expulsions and no-platforming. It's right to oppose and challenge transphobic arguments and those who attack trans people and rights.

But the biggest threat to trans people and women comes from the Tories and the right.

Dragging party back to the right

THE TWO frontrunners in Labour's leadership contest have both adopted right wing explanations for the party's failure in the 2019 general election.

Keir Starmer, who wants to drag Labour back to the right, suggested last week that Labour should have said it wanted to Remain in the European Union (EU).

Labour lost the election mostly because right wing MPs—led by Starmer—pushed Labour into backing a second EU referendum. They wanted Labour to back



Poor excuses for election defeat

Remain to cosy up to bosses.

It meant working class people who voted for Brexit saw Labour as siding with establishment figures who wanted to ignore them and overturn the result.

Yet in an interview last week, Starmer said Labour should have gone further "and said which side we would be campaigning on."

Meanwhile, Labour left group Momentum released a video of Long-Bailey speaking to two Leave voters "disappointed in the Labour Party". They asked her if Labour was "moving away from the working class," and what she says about the "impact" of immigration.

It reflected arguments that suggest working class voters are mostly right wing, and that Labour had moved too far left.

Yet Labour nearly ousted the Tory government in 2017, with a left wing manifesto that respected the EU referendum result.

All the leadership candidates want to drag Labour back to the right.

Palestine solidarity axed

REBECCA Long-Bailey, the left's candidate to be Labour Party leader, has said it is antisemitic to describe the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians as racist.

During a hustings held by Labour Friends of Israel and the Jewish Labour Movement—which says it aims to "promote the centrality of Israel in Jewish life—Long-Bailey agreed it is antisemitic to "describe Israel, its policies, or the circumstances around its foundation as racist." That

means all the leadership candidates consider it antisemitic to describe Israel as an apartheid state.

It was the latest concession to attempts to deny Palestinians the right to describe their oppression by Israel, or to explain their own history.

Some 850,000 Palestinians were systematically expelled from their homes when Israel was established in 1948 to ensure that Israel has a Jewish majority.

Macron's party in new crisis as strikers return to the streets

The French president looks weak as strikes continue, says Charlie Kimber

FRANCE'S president Emmanuel Macron is in political trouble.

The Financial Times newspaper reported last week that Macron's party "has begun to crumble at the edges in a sign of the domestic difficulties piling up for the president as his popularity ebbs".

Defections from his LREM party have left it with only a small majority in parliament, and it is expected to do poorly in municipal elections next month.

And Benjamin Griveaux, Macron's candidate for Paris mayor, withdrew from the race over a leaked sex video last week.

Strikes and demonstrations continue against his proposed attacks on pensions—and polls still show a majority in favour of the strikes.

Some French rail workers and Paris RATP public transport workers struck on Monday. The action came as the bill to implement the pensions plan was introduced to parliament. It faces 20,000 amendments put forward by left MPs.

There was some disruption on Monday, but much less than in previous strikes.

Alain, a bus striker in Nanterre in the western suburbs of Paris, told Socialist Worker, "Our depot was very strong. We blockaded the entrance for four hours."

"The mood is still very much for a fight. But it's not easy to get people out on strikes that stop and then start, and are spaced a long time apart."

Militant

The action would have been much more successful if the CGT, often seen as the most militant union federation, had backed it.

Instead the CGT said the strike was a diversion from a day of national strikes that was planned for Thursday this week.

On the eve of Monday's strikes some sections of rank and file workers launched a joint appeal.

"We invite you to meet in early March in a national meeting, bringing together workers from all unions and non-unionised, to work together to draw up a battle plan leading to a real general strike," it said.

"It is essential for us to develop this battle plan, if we want to avoid being led to just occasional days



FURY AT president Macron's pension 'reforms' continues to fill the streets with strikers

BACK STORY

Millions of workers began national strikes on 5 December

- They are fighting president Macron's plan to cut pensions and raise the state pension age
- Strikes have disrupted ports, the rail, hospitals, bus services and now ski resorts
- But some workers are fed up of the 'stop and start' nature of the strikes that union leaders call
- Rank and file workers are now organising to get a general strike

of action or seeing our sectoral movements remain isolated.

"We can still win—provided we take our affairs in hand and make concrete the prospect of all together against Macron and his reform."

Health workers struck on Friday of last week and thousands demonstrated in Paris. They marched with slogans such as, "A hospital is not a business."

Strikes began last Saturday among ski resort workers in the Pyrenees and the Alps. A fifth of the 200 resorts were disrupted.

A million seasonal workers are employed at the resorts for six months a year. The rest of the time they have only intermittent jobs.

Deepening Macron's problems means bringing all the elements of struggle together.

Canada fracking pipeline faces fierce defiance

THE CANADIAN government is ramping up attacks on indigenous First Nation land in an effort to support fossil fuel interests.

Wet'suwet'en activists have fought for years to stop the Coastal GasLink firm building a mammoth fracked gas pipeline through their territory.

On Thursday last week police enforced a Coastal GasLink injunction, removed people from the Unist'ot'en protest camp, and arrested Wet'suwet'en members.

"Indigenous people see what's happening to us and see what's happening to our territory and our pristine waters—and to our people on the ground, having semi-automatic weapons aimed at us," said Wet'suwet'en spokesperson Molly Whickham.

"People are responding to that in appropriate ways."

The attack has been met with a surge of resistance throughout Canada.

For more than a week, activists mounted blockades over a key railway line in an effort to defend First Nation land from the Canadian government.

On Monday thousands of



Protesting against the pipeline

protesters shut down central Toronto, and other large protests took place throughout Canada.

Protesters have organised resistance in cities for months, many blocking roads and occupying government offices.

"This is far from over," said Whickham. "We've had day after day of invasion and we're still here. We're still not giving up."

More online

Sanders wins New Hampshire and bosses live in fear bit.ly/Sandersvote

Women lead protests in Iraq

PROTESTERS LED by women marched in Baghdad, Nasriyah, and other cities in Iraq on Saturday last week. They were angry at attacks on them by state security forces and leading politicians.

The march was part of an ongoing anti-corruption movement that erupted last October and forced the resignation of former prime minister Adel Abdul Mahdi.

It was organised after the cleric Moqtada al-Sadr used women's participation in the movement in an attempt to discredit it as pro-West.

Sadr has led resistance movements against the US following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He has a mass following, particularly among the poor.

He previously supported the movement, but also has a stake in the Iraqi government, and recently turned against the protests.

One protester in Baghdad said, "These marches are a response to everyone who questioned the woman's voice. 'We are continuing until the end.'"

Bigotry in Barking

BARKING AND Dagenham is east London a diverse community bustling with a multicultural identity.

It was horrifying to see the recent news of antisemitic graffiti being found near a Dagenham supermarket.

It's terrible that such far right and racist expressions exist and are being expressed in our community.

It is at times like this that we need to fight against the far right and fascist ideas that still exist.

I'm glad that Stand Up to Racism held a protest against such antisemitic and racist behaviour by bigoted people.

Marvel Kalukembi
East London

Mobility pass win

AFTER 18 months persistent campaigning by the Nottingham Reinstate the Mobility Pass Campaign, the Labour group has voted to reinstate a 24/7 free bus pass.

The pass is for people with disabilities.

It was scrapped in August 2018 after a sham consultation.

Since then the pass has only been able to be used between 9.30am and 11am.

The decision needs to be approved by the council budget meeting—where Labour have 55 seats out of 60.

If the vote goes through, the reinstated pass will be available to use from 1 April. It shows persistent campaigning can win.

Richard Buckwell
Nottingham

Activists in Haringey take on rising rents

WHEN THEY took office in 2010, the Tories introduced new so-called affordable rent tenancies which they intended to replace social rents over time.

These rents can be up to 80 percent of market rent, which makes them completely unaffordable.

Many local authorities resisted the higher rents.

But ten years on, of the 168 English local authorities which own housing stock, 124 have at least some affordable rent homes. These figures are

about to change. This is because 18 affordable rent tenants in Haringey in North London are organising to get social rents like the rest of the borough's council tenants.

The council is promising to cut these high rents by one third. That proves that lobbying and protests work. But we still do not know whether the council leadership will offer the normal council rents which tenants are demanding.

Paul Burnham
North London

Nandy completely off mark about EU

THERE ARE some half-plausible arguments for the European Union (EU). But a recent one from Labour leadership candidate Lisa Nandy is just liberal romanticism—and factually incorrect.

Nandy said, "For all its imperfections, the European ideal is one that has lifted working people up together and provided Britain with more than half a century of peace."

Workers' living standards across Europe have fluctuated according to cycles of growth and austerity that the EU has

Kuperwasser was joined by Colonel Richard Kemp, who was sent to Kabul in 2003 to take command of British Forces in Afghanistan.

He has regularly contributed to the alt-right news outlet Breitbart.

In 2017 he appeared in a podcast with fascist Tommy Robinson.

Anti-racists, pro-Palestinian activists and socialists gathered outside the venue to make it clear that Islamophobia and complicity in human rights violations are unacceptable.

A member of the group who organised the protest went into the event.

They reported back that the

audience and speakers spoke mostly about the protesters not the topic.

Colonel Kemp later tweeted that, the protesters had a "warped racist agenda". Clearly our protest rattled the audience and speakers inside.

It is important to know that this event didn't just happen at our university.

The same speakers did a tour of a number of different universities.

We cannot allow such people to spread their propaganda on campus.

Everywhere they go, we need to mobilise.

Sophia Beach
Bristol



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

Support for Palestine

I WAS recently reading up on Andrew Faulds—a hero of the Labour Party.

According to one of his obituaries he never achieved high ministerial office thanks to his outspoken support for the Palestinian cause.

It was amazing that Jeremy Corbyn got as far as he did.

Brian Burden
Essex

How can Bernie win?

IT WAS a victory for the left in the US after Sanders won the popular vote in Iowa and New Hampshire.

But despite this he is still behind Pete Buttigieg in the delegate count. The US political system is truly broken.

Sam Ord
On Twitter

Remember Dr Li Wen

THERE HAS been a petition in China that calls for an end to censorship and for support for residents from Wuhan who are suffering discrimination.

Let's also hope that the anger over the death of Dr Li Wen—the Chinese doctor who first posted about the coronavirus and was then silenced by the police—brings sweeping change.

Lawrence Wong
South London

Anger at deportations

WE LIVE in a racist system that separates families and violates human rights. Airlines and pilots need to be lobbied since they are complicit in this crime.

Yasmin A
On Facebook

Praise for Parasite film

THE FILM Parasite has won a well-deserved best picture win at the Oscars. It's the first foreign language film to do so.

I am happy as this film portrays class divisions in such a clear way.

But I can't help feeling the rich people at the award ceremony cheering the win, are examples of the parasitic ruling class the film is about.

Sally
Birmingham



The far right—a danger

done little about. In terms of war, the EU hasn't stopped us being dragged into disastrous wars against other countries.

It's also historical nonsense to imply that a European war would have

been stopped by an EU-like organisation.

Also EU neoliberalism has contributed to a rise in far right parties across much of Europe.

Then there's the matter of thousands of refugees drowning while trying to enter Europe.

Sorry to bring historical facts to bear on Nandy's type of misty eyed romanticism.

But if we can't even see the realities of capitalism and war, we'll be stuck with it.

James Oliver
Sheffield

EVERYONE SHOULD BACK THIS VITAL STRIKE

Workers in universities across Britain are about to strike for fourteen days. **Sadie Robinson** spoke to activists building the fight for equality and against neoliberal education, and urges everyone to get behind the strikers and their dispute

A HUGE WAVE of strikes was set to begin in dozens of universities from next week. It will challenge the neoliberal vision of education.

“This is a fight for the wider trade union movement,” Carlo Morelli, a UCU rep at Dundee university, told Socialist Worker. He is right.

UCU union members at 74 universities plan strikes over issues that will be depressingly familiar to millions of other workers across Britain. Low pay—and years of real terms pay cuts. Casual contracts and zero-hours jobs. A gender pay gap of 13.7 percent and a race pay gap of 26 percent.

And spiralling workloads, rising stress and mental health problems.

Jennie Drabble from Sheffield Hallam University said the strikes were “about having 20 minutes to mark a piece of work, working overtime without pay, stress, bullying and endless admin”.

Brian Garvey, chair of the UCU at Strathclyde university, agreed. “At Strathclyde we had a 41 percent rise in the number of staff off with mental health problems in one year,” he told Socialist Worker.

But he added that casualisation and pay inequality are “motivating people to get involved”.

The latest strikes follow a magnificent eight-day walkout at 60 universities in November and December last year.

“Our last picket line was populated

BACK STORY

The union is engaged in two disputes—one to defend the USS pension scheme and the other over “four fights”. These are:

●PAY

Pay rise of the RPI rate of inflation plus 3 percent, or a minimum rise of £3,349. £10 an hour for all directly employed workers, and the Foundation Living Wage for contracted workers

●WORKLOAD

A 35-hour week. Plans to tackle stress and ill-health. Payment for the unpaid hours people have worked

●EQUALITY

An end to the gender and race pay gaps. A full equal pay audit

●CASUALISATION

An end to zero hours contracts and other improvements. Outsourced staff brought back in-house

●PENSIONS

The USS pension scheme applies to workers in older universities. The union is demanding there be no detriment—workers should not pay more or get less in retirement

HANDS OFF OUR PENSIONS

by people working two jobs, three jobs, people in precarious work,” said Brian. “The nature of work has changed in higher education, and these strikes are an example of what that means.”

Some 3,500 people joined the union within three weeks of last year’s action being called—and the union is still growing.

Jo Gilmore, a departmental rep at York university, said she felt “inspired” following a union meeting last week with “lots of casualised staff”.

“There’s a lot happening on the ground,” she told Socialist Worker. “A lot of people are really keen to get involved in building the strike.”

Julie Hearn is president of the UCU branch at Lancaster university. She is currently fighting a victimisation and is off sick—but said preparation for the strike is going well.

“We have a draft programme of teach-outs for the 14 days,” she told Socialist Worker. “We have 2,500 bulletins for non-union members explaining what the strike is about.

“We’ve got somebody in charge of ‘fun’ for every day of the strikes, organising music and so on to keep up morale.”

Bruce Baker is a UCU rep at Newcastle university, where a “shark of solidarity” will be on the picket lines. He said fighting back has changed the branch. “During previous strikes a group of members started a running club,” he told Socialist Worker.

“They would jog around campus with



STRIKERS AT Newcastle University with their famous ‘shark of solidarity’

PICTURE: @SOLIDARITYSHARK/TWITTER

their strike armbands on, and they’ve continued to meet once a week. It’s a permanent feature of our branch now. The strikes create these new things.

“We now have a big, active strike committee and probably a quarter of the people are new. The committee is planning all the details for the action.

“We’re getting really good at going on strike.”

Every union should back the strike. And UCU members have to fight to get maximum solidarity—for instance, by speaking at union meetings and inviting other workers to speak to teach-outs.

THE ENTHUSIASM to keep fighting is clear. But it didn’t stop some right wingers, and their media friends, claiming the strikes don’t have support.

Brian said there was “no opposition” to striking for 14 days at a Strathclyde branch meeting last week. And he added that his branch was “absolutely” for fighting over pensions and the four fights at the same time.

“It’s a big ask,” he said. “But everybody on the picket lines last year knew the employers were moving very reluctantly towards negotiation. I don’t think anybody was surprised that further action was called.”

Jo said grassroots organising is key. “People have had questions, but by the end of our meetings they are much clearer about the need to take decisive action,” she said.

“People I spoke to a week ago who probably wouldn’t have struck are now telling me they are going to strike. It shows the importance of not just of branch meetings but organising on a departmental or even building level.

“Rank and file work has been vital and it’s what will win the dispute.”

Some workers are concerned about the impact of the strike on students. Yet last year’s strikes, and walkouts over the USS scheme in 2018, saw lots of student solidarity.

The NUS student union backs the UCU. Brian said student support in



On the streets in Cambridge

Strathclyde is “resolute”, but argued workers shouldn’t be defensive about taking action. “We have to remind ourselves that the purpose of a strike is to be disruptive,” he said.

Another issue is that, while casualised contracts are growing in universities, there are also some very highly-paid staff.

“There’s a class dynamic to some of the debates,” explained Carlo. “Some professors on permanent contracts want to focus on pensions and sacrifice everything else.

“But everything is linked. If people are on low pay, they can’t afford pensions. That will undermine the scheme for everyone.”

Mark Abel, a UCU rep at Brighton university and a union national negotiator, agreed. “We can’t say some people’s

issues are more important than others,” he told Socialist Worker.

“During previous strikes young, casualised staff struck for the pensions of more secure staff. We can’t abandon them.”

Bruce said there is often a “dip” in mood just before a strike, as people get nervous. “That usually changes very quickly on the picket line,” he said.

“Also we have already lost hundreds of pounds striking. We need to get something from it.”

A big question is whether the strikes are getting anywhere—and whether it’s possible to win.

“People ask what have we accomplished,” said Bruce. “The point to make is that our strikes last time got bosses to negotiate. They had said right up until the day before the last strike that they wouldn’t negotiate.”

Brian added, “Before our 2018 strikes, they wanted to do away with USS as a defined benefit scheme completely. The fact that we are where we are with pensions does show the success of industrial action.”

And bosses did make a new offer before this latest round of strikes. But they failed to make promises on improving conditions or to abandon their 1.8 percent below-inflation pay offer.

Bruce was glad the offer “talked about



Students, such as these in Leeds, have shown tremendous support for striking lecturers and other university staff

PICTURE: LESLEY MCGORRIGAN

casualisation, workload and the gender pay gap”.

But he said, “It was vague and not nailed down. We need a national agreement on these issues. We have them on other things, why not these?”

Mark agreed. “People want to know this will be worth it,” he said. “We need something firm that isn’t just empty words. If we could get some kind of framework deal on casualisation especially that would be a major step forward.

“For instance, every institution could have to enter negotiations to phase out zero hours contracts and move hourly-paid staff onto permanent contracts.

“Quite a few universities are doing that, so what’s the problem with all of them doing it?”

Brian agreed that bosses can resolve this dispute, but said it would take a battle to force them to do so.

And he is “optimistic and pleased that people are so resolute”. “One person who was concerned about strikes said we’re asking for a big restructure in higher education and I agree—it is,” said Brian. “It does require a big shift.

“But this further 14 days shows a strength within our membership to carry the fight through.”

The last strike took place in the run-up to the general election. Several workers thought the election of a Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn could open up a real chance of transforming life for ordinary people.

“We were hopeful that a Labour government might come in and we might get better trade union laws,” said Bruce. “And that might encourage employers to negotiate with us.

“That obviously isn’t going to happen in the foreseeable future.

“Our dispute isn’t about winning an intellectual debate with employers about what they should do. It’s an industrial struggle. And we have to make it impossible for universities to carry on as they are.”

Brian hoped that the struggle can show other workers that resistance is possible.

“We’ve had extensive defeats,” he said. “But we can’t go on blaming Margaret Thatcher for another 20 or 30 years.

“We must win this. There must be a victory so we can go back to members and say that was worth our time.”

UCU strike march

Wednesday 26 February

● Assemble 12 noon, Tavistock Square, London, WC1

● March to UCEA/UUK offices in the city



Strikers brave the rain in Bradford

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

BRADFORD

Women, resistance and revolution

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm,
Bread + Roses,
14 N Parade,
BD1 3HT

CARDIFF

Booklaunch—System Change Not Climate Change

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
43 Charles St,
CF10 2GB

CREWE & STOKE-ON-TRENT

Booklaunch—System Change Not Climate Change

Thu 12 Mar, 7.15pm,
Royal Voluntary Service,
29 Charles Street,
ST1 3JP

GREATER MANCHESTER

Booklaunch—Transgender Resistance, Socialism and the Fight for Trans Liberation

Wed 26 Feb, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Women, resistance and revolution

Thu 12 Mar, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Sq,
LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

Women, resistance and revolution

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
22 School Ln, L1 3BT

OXFORD

Unite to save our NHS—how to defend our health services

Thu 23 Apr, 7pm,
Oxford Town Hall,
St Aldate's, OX1 1BX

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNLEY

Climate change and transport alternatives

Thu 27 Feb, 6.30pm,
Room 302, The Civic,
Hanson St, S70 2HZ

BIRMINGHAM

Get Trump's hands off Palestine

Wed 26 Feb, 7pm,
The Church at Carrs Lane,
Carrs Ln,
B4 7SX

BRISTOL

Feeling the Bern—can there be a socialist in the White House?

Thu 27 Feb, 7.30pm,
YHA,
14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA



SINN FEIN leader Mary Lou McDonald and supporters celebrate the Irish election result

THE IRISH ELECTION
A POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE?

DUNDEE

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

LONDON: SOUTH

Wed 26 Feb, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra
Rd, facing Windrush Sq),
Brixton, SW2 1EP

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
William Morris Community Centre,
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
Walthamstow,
E17 6QQ

SWANSEA

Thu 27 Feb, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Thu 27 Feb, 7.15pm,
Light House,
Suite 16, Chubb Bldg,
Fryer St,
WV1 1HT

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

The French Revolution

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB11 1NR

CHESTERFIELD

Is human nature a barrier to socialism?

Thu 27 Feb, 7pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St,
S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

Are we entering a new age of global revolt?

Thu 27 Feb, 8pm,
Oyster Room, Hythe
Community Centre,
1 Ventura Drive,
CO1 2FG

EDINBURGH

Fake news and alternative facts—who controls the media?

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

GLASGOW

What's wrong with privilege theory?

Thu 27 Feb, 7pm,
Avant Garde,
33-44 King St,
Merchant City, G1 5QT

HARLOW

Australia to Jakarta—what's behind the climate crisis?

Thu 27 Feb, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys,
CM18 6BX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Get Trump's hands off Palestine

Thu 27 Feb, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Sq, LS3 1AD

LONDON: HACKNEY

A rebel's guide to Alexandra Kollontai

Thu 27 Feb, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

Get Trump's hands off Palestine

Wed 26 Feb, 7pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner
Vincent Rd), N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Get Trump's hands off Palestine

Thu 27 Feb, 7pm,
Elizabeth House,
2 Hurlock St,
Highbury, N5 1ED

LONDON: NEWHAM

Can there be a progressive patriotism?

Wed 26 Feb, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next
to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Get Trump's hands off Palestine

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Weavers Community Centre,
10 Shacklewell St, E2 7EG

NEWCASTLE

The monarchy—why do the royals still reign?

Wed 26 Feb, 7pm,
Floor 2, Commercial
Union House,
39 Pilgrim St,
NE1 6QE

OXFORD

Global crisis—can Johnson and Trump save capitalism?

Thu 27 Feb, 7pm,
Restore Building,
Manzil Way,
OX4 1YH

PLYMOUTH

Can non-violent direct action bring about change?

Thu 27 Feb, 7pm,
Quaker House,
74 Mutley Plain,
PL4 6LF

PORTSMOUTH

Independence for Scotland—what do socialists say?

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SCARBOROUGH

Revolutions don't work—do they?

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Tap and Spile,
94 Falsgrave Rd,
YO12 5AZ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Racism is not the cure for coronavirus and neither is capitalism

Thu 27 Feb, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near
Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

Too many people? Climate change and the myth of overpopulation

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Central Baptist Church Hall,
Devonshire Rd,
SO15 2GY

YORK

Too many people? Climate change and the myth of overpopulation

Wed 26 Feb, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

NATIONAL

March against racism

Sat 21 Mar, 12 noon,
London and Glasgow,
Called by Stand Up To Racism,
Go to standuptoracism.org.uk

Marxism 2020

A festival of socialist ideas
2 - 5 July,
East London,
Go to marxismfestival.org.uk

BRIGHTON

Booklaunch—Transgender Resistance, Socialism and the Fight for Trans Liberation

Thu 27 Feb, 6.30pm,
M2 University of Brighton,
58-67 Grand Parade,
BN2 0JY

OXFORD

Week of Action and demonstration against racism

Tue 17 Mar, 7pm,
Oxford Town Hall,
St Aldate's,
OX1 1BX

BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



The Labour Party—A Marxist History
by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein
and Charlie Kimber, £14.99



A Rebel's Guide to Engels
By Camilla Royle
£8



Hegel and Revolution
By Terry Sullivan and
Donny Gluckstein, £7



Apartheid Is Not A Game
By Geoff Brown and
Christian Hogsbjerg, £4

1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE PHONE 020 7637 1848 WEB bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600

Email

enquires@swp.org.uk
Post PO Box 74955,
London E16 9EJ

A novel written for an era of climate grief and anxiety

Weather follows the story of an ordinary person coming to terms with climate catastrophe. It's engaging, but not very hopeful, says **Sophie Squire**

WEATHER, BY Jenny Offill, contemplates how we are meant to feel in the face of climate disaster—or as the book puts it, “the end of the world”.

Lizzie navigates what could be called a normal life. She worries about leaving her son Eli at school every day. She's a good sister to her brother, Henry, and supports him when his first child is born.

Her story begins when she accepts a job answering emails for Sylvia, an academic who runs a podcast called Hell or High Water.

Through the emails that Lizzie sends and the conversations she has with Sylvia, she soon realises that a lot of people are worried about the end of the world.

There's no avoiding the context for this novel. The term “climate grief”—the feelings of stress, anxiety and depression that can come with facing up to ecological catastrophe—has recently come into use.



Presenting the burden of knowing about the extent and magnitude of the climate crisis is what this book does well.

What it doesn't do is offer a lot of hope. Lizzie and other characters are almost resigned to an apocalyptic climate future, and passive to the point of being unlikeable.

Weather does also touch on how the rich can find ways to deal with the effects of climate catastrophe on their own lives. Again, Lizzie mostly seems to accept that this is the way it has to be.

Weather is a thoughtful often funny book about modern life.

It has an engaging stream-of-consciousness style that allows you to really understand Lizzie as a character.

This book is engaging, but it can be a bit depressing.

Weather, by Jenny Offill. Published by Granta. RRP £12.99



PROTESTING IN 1972 against racism and police brutality

PICTURE: VANLEY BURKE. FROM THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS TRUST COLLECTION

A history of resistance in Birmingham

EXHIBITION

BIRMINGHAM REVOLUTIONS—POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Sq, Birmingham, B3 3DH. Until 4 September 2020. Free

THIS DISPLAY explores Birmingham's vibrant and varied history of protest and activism—from the Priestley Riots of 1791 to the LGBT+ campaigns of today.

It starts with the “Glorious Revolution”—when parliament overthrew the monarchy in a military coup in 1688.

But it also covers the Chartist movement, the general strike of

1926 and the Miners' Strike of 1984-85.

It also features the anti-nuclear campaign CND, but nothing of Stop the War.

Some of it focuses on the Nazi National Front (NF), and the anti-Nazi response.

It features photographs of anti-Nazi mobilisations from the 1970s

Quite rightly, it points out that the notorious speech by musician Eric Clapton—proclaiming racist Tory politician Enoch

Powell “was right”—was given at the Birmingham Odeon.

The exhibition juxtaposes the NF with anti-fascist activity.

It asks viewers to say whether they think it's alright to include the far right in an exhibition of resistance.

This is a good exhibition, if a little small. You could visit and enjoy it in your lunchtime.

But it's worth spending time to read the notes that accompany the exhibits.

They're informative—and also solidly behind those who have resisted.

Jay Williams



On display

POETRY

WATERLOO PRESS & LIT UP: POETRY BOOK LAUNCH

Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Town Hall Approach Road, London N15 4RX.

29 February, 2:30pm.

Entry £3 refundable against price of book purchase

INDIE publisher Waterloo Press is launching two new poetry collections.

They are Adventures in Racial Capitalism by Kev Inn, and Sod 'em—and tomorrow by Des Mannay.

Mannay has won prizes or been shortlisted in seven competitions, published in 18 anthologies and performed at numerous festivals.

A long time community activist and former shop



Des Mannay

steward, he has had articles published in Socialist Worker, Socialist Review, Planet, and was on the Editorial Board of Welsh Socialist Voice.

Inn is a poet, teacher and social historian.

He has taught sociology at three London colleges, and as a researcher, has completed a PhD project, and worked at the University of Birmingham.

Inn has had work published in Race and Class, and contributed a chapter to the book, Black British History—New Perspectives.

What's on at BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop

Transgender Resistance

With author Laura Miles
Friday 28 Feb, 6.30pm
Admission £2, pay on the door



1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE
020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

THERE WAS a “real buzz of excitement” in London 50 years ago this month, when the first national Women’s Liberation conference was held in Ruskin college, Oxford.

That is how Mary Kennedy, who was involved with the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) at the time, later remembered the event.

“Here came the turning point, and we were all able to speak out,” she said.

The conference brought together hundreds of women—and was a key moment in the struggle for women’s liberation.

Following decades of stultifying oppression, the fact that the meeting took place was significant.

The Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM) developed out of struggles by women workers demanding equal pay.

Radical movements in the 1960s had started to blow apart the repressive world.

The conference took place at a time of rising class struggle and a strong left in Britain.

There was more pressure to take up ideas of women’s liberation in unions and workplaces. And more equality legislation was being written into law.

The conference was a refreshing break from those who said issues of liberation could be ignored. And it was a leap forward that women organised to demand that they discuss what they wanted to.

Debates about reproductive rights, sexuality, the role of men, working rights and the family thrived.

The conference was a roar of defiance from women who had enough of being dismissed and patronised—including by some on the left and in unions.

Ideas of women’s liberation became more widespread.

Involved

But as many working class women were involved in struggles alongside working class men, relatively few activists were involved in the WLM itself.

Yet the conference, between 500 and 600 women strong, was the biggest meeting of its kind up to that point. For many, the experience was thrilling.

Historian Catherine Hall said the excitement partly came from starting to see oppression “not as individual issues, but a collective and social issue”.

“That was what was most important,” she said. “The recognition that we shared experiences that had a name.”

The conference was chaotic, as numbers far exceeded expectations.

Author Sheila Rowbotham said, “Everybody arrived with their sleeping bags on Friday night. Which was turmoil.



THOUSANDS OF women joined the first national Women’s Liberation Movement march in London, 1971

FIGHT FOR WOMEN’S FREEDOM

A landmark conference 50 years ago this month helped to boost struggles for women’s liberation. Sarah Bates looks at its significance and lessons of the movement for today



Sheila Rowbotham in 1969

“And then management managed to extend the conference into the Oxford Union—an extraordinarily stiff environment that was meant to produce male orators who would become prime ministers.”

Socialist Worker reported at the time, “There were members of Women’s Liberation Workshops, trade unions, radical single-issue pressure groups and from many left tendencies, including more than 50 from the IS”, which was



Debates about reproductive rights, the role of men and the family thrived

the forerunner to the Socialist Workers Party.

“Whatever their disagreements, many agreed on one vital point—that full emancipation of women and the elimination of their oppression could only be achieved by a revolutionary change in society which would give women and men real freedom.”

Yet divisions—over how to organise, campaign priorities and other issues—quickly grew.

Many delegates came

from local campaigns or “consciousness raising” groups where they discussed personal experiences of oppression. Organiser Sally Alexander said her workshop group in Oxford often discussed “the fact that women were very low paid”.

“We were expected to become either a nurse or a secretary,” she said. “Most women were cleaners. Women were the poor.”

Professor Stevi Jackson wrote in 2017, “As feminist activists we encountered disbelief about what are now seen as real problems.”

She said activists were battling “a tendency to see feminism as simply a matter of individual choice and freedom rather than thinking in terms of systematic inequalities.

“What many women were constantly told was that we should know our place and not make a fuss about ‘personal problems’.”

But “make a fuss” they did—often under the banner, “the personal is political”.

The Ruskin conference hoped to move beyond discussing oppression to fighting it collectively.

In a final session called “Where are we going?” delegates agreed four central demands that would come to shape their movement.

THESE were equal pay, equal educational and job opportunities, free contraception and abortion on demand, and free 24-hour nurseries.

The demands reflected an orientation on the needs of working class women. They focused on real, material changes that would have an impact on women’s lives.

And they were rooted in the idea that liberation wouldn’t be won through personal dedication, but through a united working class fighting together.

Changes were already taking place. Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s a host of legislative changes provided formal backing for equality.

The 1967 Abortion Act gave women legal access to abortions, despite some limits.

And the 1970 Equal Pay Act—although it didn’t come into force until five years later—was a cornerstone in equality legislation.

Both of these important legal rights were fought for by working class women.

Grassroots campaigns had demanded abortion rights. And striking women workers—most famously at Ford Dagenham in 1968—battled for equal pay with men.

Women workers played a hugely significant role in this period of working class struggle. Around 50 percent of workers were in trade unions in the early 1970s.

Many women worked at least part time while also

being primarily responsible for domestic labour and child-rearing. And the influence of socialists and trade unions in the WLM was stronger than in its sister movement in the US.

Some had been active in the anti-war, Civil Rights and student movements that exploded in Britain and the US in the late 1960s.

These struggles shook our rulers and saw women and men fighting together in a battle against the system.

This spirit infused discussions at Ruskin. It wasn’t just about demanding legislative change, but bold, radical action.

The following decade saw more militant action against women’s oppression.

There were attempts to organise women workers, such as the campaign to unionise night cleaners in London in the early 1970s.

WLM activists supported and picketed alongside the cleaners, who struck twice over poor working conditions and low pay.

Activists staged audacious actions such as flour bombing the Miss World contests later in 1970 over the sexual objectification of women.

And the following year around 4,000 people took to the streets of London for the first national WLM march.

There were always disagreements in the movement, and by the late 1970s they became insurmountable.

The main division was over what caused oppression and how best to fight it. Some women saw the fight for women’s rights as linked with workers’ struggle.

Others were more influenced by radical feminism, and saw men as the problem. They argued against socialist politics.

The WLM eventually disintegrated, holding its last conference in Britain in 1978.

Some of the more privileged women who had been involved, shifted to look at improving their individual lives instead of fighting for wider change. Many others joined the Labour Party.

Today, the four demands of the conference are as urgent as ever. Despite half a century of Equal Pay legislation, women are still on average paid 17 percent less than men.

Women still don’t have full abortion rights. The right to choose is repeatedly under attack.

And a decade of austerity



Women workers fighting for equal pay in Birmingham in 1976 (top) and delegates to the 1970 conference (above)



Fighting back today

READ MORE

● **Marxism & Women’s Liberation** by Judith Orr £9.99

● **Women, Resistance and Revolution—a history of women and revolution in the modern world** by Sheila Rowbotham £9.99

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



COMMENT

The left has many problems, being ‘too woke’ isn’t one

Left wingers who claim that being ‘woke’ about oppression is a turn off for working class people propagate poisonous nonsense, says **Simon Basketter**



THE TERM ‘woke’ was popularised by the US Black Lives Matter movement against police killings and brutality

THE PROBLEM is clear. It is that people like me don’t have a voice. Frankly it’s about time middle aged, white, male journalists got a break.

This is the common moan of too many on the right. It is the reason the cured pork that is Piers Morgan exists.

Pub bores bemoaning political correctness is as British as covering up royal child abuse and invading other countries.

What is more surprising is that whining about “identity politics gone mad” is the new contrarian wisdom seeping through bits of the left.

The argument has a number of variants. But nearly all of it is in response to the failure of “Ohhh, Jeremy Corbyn” to win an election.

The argument goes that it’s because workers of the north of England—it is always the north—didn’t trust Corbyn and the left because it was too busy being cosmopolitan. So we need to drop the snowflake crap and get back to proper politics.

It tends to be based on a rather muscular view of what workers are.

Whippet

The worker in question takes time out from wearing his flat cap to give his whippet some plain speaking. And, as everyone knows, plain speaking is short for being against immigration.

They do not have time between going down t’pit and hitting their wives for modern things like not being beastly to LGBT+ people. If the left wants to be successful, the argument goes, then it has to relate to this and stop the “identity politics”.

Most of those propagating this poisonous nonsense are somewhat removed from the mythical dark satanic mills. And relating turns out to

mean accepting reactionary ideas. If you’re reading this and thinking does he mean me—then I do.

Opposition to oppression is non-negotiable—the revolutionary Vladimir Lenin said if you missed that, you weren’t even a democrat.

Now, the left shouldn’t simply be a talking shop. And there are weaknesses with an approach that sees making sure we have better language to deal with oppression as the only priority.

But it is honestly a good thing to make racists uncomfortable enough that they have to think about how to hide their prejudice.

To say being “woke” is offputting to the mythical working class person is to lack any self-awareness on the left.

The opaque language used in the defeat re-enactments that make up much of the left’s activities aren’t exactly welcoming.

At one level this is a sort of embarrassing dad dancing. Please stop the memes and language we didn’t use in college. But it has deeper



It is honestly a good thing to make racists uncomfortable

roots. In his 1937 book *The Road To Wigan Pier*, George Orwell asks why everyone isn’t a socialist since socialism is so obviously true.

He blames the left. “One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words ‘socialism’ and ‘communism’ draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit juice drinker, nudist, sandal wearer, sex maniac, Quaker, ‘nature cure’ quack, pacifist and feminist in England,” he wrote.

He focused on the supposed “moral superiority of workers” instead of their economic power to shut down capitalism.

Intellectuals

He believed theory is middle class while experience is working class. Importantly, this means ignoring working class intellectuals and focusing instead on the weaknesses of the “middle class left”.

There is a long history of the left ignoring oppression—not because it was too busy fighting over economic issues, but rather because it wasn’t fighting over anything.

It is a sort of collateral damage for seeing Labour as the way to change the world.

Finally it is worth noting “woke” has been around for a while, but it was the Black Lives Matter movement that bought it to wider attention.

That was a mass movement to resist US cops gunning down black people. And that’s not the worst place to start to fightback.

Foreign Office staff plan to step up struggle

by NICK CLARK

STRIKING outsourced workers at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) plan to step up their fight against bosses at contractor Interserve.

The strikers—cleaners, caterers and maintenance workers—plan a series of protests as they head towards the final week of a month-long strike.

They want Interserve to recognise their PCS union after the private contractor attacked their pay and conditions.

Trade unionists and MPs—including Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and shadow chancellor John McDonnell—joined their picket line on Tuesday of last week.

Surprised

“Most of the shadow front bench came,” PCS rep and carpenter Terry Rose told Socialist Worker. “I was quite surprised.”

Aaron, another striker, said, “Support like that boosts our morale. Morale is high already, but it makes us feel as if we’re not alone.”



FOREIGN OFFICE workers are holding a month-long strike

He added that strikers were encouraged when trade unionists from outside the Foreign Office arrived at the building—and refused to cross the picket line.

“Yesterday trade unionists from Unison, Unite and the TUC came down to talk

inside about trade union recognition,” said Aaron.

“But when they realised we were on strike they refused to cross the picket line.”

The workers at FCO’s headquarters in central London have been fighting for more than a year. The battle

began shortly after the FCO renewed Interserve’s contract in late 2018, when bosses launched a wave of attacks on pay and conditions.

They included cutting cleaners’ overtime, forcing them to work harder for less pay, and a raft of

redundancies across the board. Changes to pay dates meant workers went for several weeks without pay.

Striker Mohammed told Socialist Worker that the strike can help “people to see what these outsourcing companies do”.

Money

“They cut a lot of our hours, they want us to do more work for less money,” he explained. “They’ve cut our sick pay.”

Bosses haven’t yet backed down, but strikers are determined. “We’re up for it,” said Mohammed.

“We mean business. We’re going to strike again if they don’t resolve this issue.”

“I haven’t heard anyone say they want to quit,” added Aaron. “Cleaners, porters, maintenance—we’re going to carry on until we get what we want. “We all have our own views on what to do next, but for me we can’t go back to having two or three day strikes—to Interserve that would be a sign of weakness.

“We have to increase what we’re doing.”

Some names have been changed

How to show support for the strikers

THE PCS union is asking trade unionists and others in the labour movement to send solidarity to the Foreign Office strikers.

Show your support by:

● Urging your MP to sign Early Day Motion 125—go to bit.ly/EDM125

● Signing and publicising the union’s e-action—read more at bit.ly/PCSeaction

● Donating to the PCS fighting fund at bit.ly/PCSfund

● Sending messages of support to helenf@pcs.org.uk

● Visiting the picket line at Whitehall/King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH

● Tweet your support using the hashtag #InterserveStrikers

**JOIN THE
SOCIALIST
WORKERS
PARTY**

- ☐ Yes, I'd like to be a member
☐ I'd like more information and to receive emails

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Return to SWP membership department, PO Box 74955
London E16 9EJ. Phone 020 7840 5602

Email membership@swp.org.uk



Subscribe to Socialist Worker

Have Socialist Worker delivered with your post every week for a direct debit of £5 a month

I want to subscribe to Socialist Worker with a monthly direct debit of £5

Name

Address

Postcode

E-mail

Phone

I would like ____ extra papers to sell
(this will not be deducted from my bank account)

For official use only—this is not part of the instructions to your bank/building society

Sherborne Publications,
PO Box 74955 London E16 9EJ

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by direct debit

Originator identification no. 9 7 3 3 5 5

Our reference no.

.....

1. Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To the manager:

Bank/building society

Address

Postcode

2. Name(s) of account holder(s)

.....

3. Branch sort code / /

4. Bank/building society account no.

5. Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay Sherborne Publications direct debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the direct debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Sherborne Publications and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank or building society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some types of account



Direct debit guarantee

■ This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.

■ If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Sherborne Publications will notify you ten working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Sherborne Publications to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.

■ If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by Sherborne Publications or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.

■ If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Sherborne Publications asks you to.

■ You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Socialist Worker Subscriptions

Post PO Box 74955 London E16 9EJ
Phone 020 7840 5601

Web www.socialistworker.co.uk

Dosh for deportations— how private firms cash in

Deportations to Jamaica have exposed the horror of Britain’s immigration system. But, says **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**, they’ve got bosses rubbing their hands

BEHIND THE brutality of Britain’s immigration system lies a web of subcontractors that profit from deportations.

It begins with the firms that run Britain’s 11 detention centres and imprison people before deportation—Serco, G4s Mitie and the GEO Group.

The Home Office then asks Carlson Wagonlit (CWT), a travel agents for the rich and powerful, to arrange deportation flights. It picks a charter airline to transport desperate people to danger (see below and right).

Christopher, who is being held at Harmondsworth immigration detention centre, near Heathrow, was almost taken on the “charter flight” to Jamaica last Tuesday.

A Court of Appeal order blocked the deportation of some people from Harmondsworth and nearby Colnbrook at the last minute.

That didn’t stop subcontractors taking Christopher and others covered by the order to Doncaster Sheffield Airport for removal—only to turn around once they got there.

Regime

Christopher spoke to Socialist Worker about how he’s experienced Britain’s detention and deportation regime at almost every stage.

“Between 10 to 12 o’clock at night eight to ten men came to my room and said, ‘You have to come with us to the charter flight,’” he said.

“I knew I wasn’t on their flight, but I wasn’t going to fight.”

Every time Christopher tried to object to his treatment, he says officers said it was “against the rules”. “I was on speaker phone calling my partner Margaret and my solicitor as I got my shoes on,” he explained.

“They say there’s no paperwork that I shouldn’t be on the flight and that I had to go with them.

“I got through to my solicitor, I begged them, ‘Speak to my solicitor,’ but they said they are not obliged to speak to them.

“They said, ‘He’s on the list—he’s on the flight.’”

Christopher says he and three others were led to a “Serco prison van” with four tiny cells where he was kept from “around 1am to 2pm”. “When I looked right, I saw the door,” he said. “When I looked left, I saw the other side.

“If it turned left, it bashed one of my shoulders, if it turned the other way, my other shoulder.”

Christopher and the other detainees were not allowed out of the prison van cells for the whole journey.

Begging

“I kept begging, ‘Can one of you take us for a pee outside or to pace inside the vehicle,’” he said.

“They just kept saying, ‘No, no, no—it’s against the rules. But it’s not against the rules to deny us human rights?’”

After the van got back to Harmondsworth from the airport at around 12 noon, Christopher says they were kept inside until 2pm. “They said they were too busy inside the centre to let us in,” he said.

“And then at reception we had to book in again in because everything for us was scrapped.

“It was quarter to six before we were finished.”

Christopher’s plight is just a snapshot in the everyday brutality inflicted inside Britain’s immigration system.



DEPORTATIONS ARE big money

Charter flight profits soar

CHARTER AIRLINES like to present themselves as providing planes for the superrich, celebrities and holiday makers.

They also make money from racist deportations.

Not content with running the European Union’s (EU) deportations, Evelop Airlines lends its services to the British government.

The charter airline’s plane was used for the deportation flight to Jamaica last week.

Last December a joint venture between Evelop and Air Nostrum was awarded a contract worth £10 million by the Spanish ministry of the interior.

This includes deportations

of migrants for Frontex—the EU’s border guards service.

The British government’s preferred charter airline is Titan Airways.

It was contracted for the first charter flight to Jamaica since the Windrush scandal in February 2019.

Titan Airways was the company responsible for the deportation flight blocked by the Stansted 15 group of protesters in March 2017.

The flight would have carried 50 people to Nigeria and Ghana without the direct action.

In 2019 its gross profits increased to £12.3 million and its highest paid director received £181,641.

Lock-ups get bosses loaded

BRITAIN’S immigration detention centres mean big business for outsourcers—and brutality for detainees. One, Mitie, has run Harmondsworth and Colnbrook, near London Heathrow Airport, on a £180 million eight-year deal since 2014.

While bosses rake in profits, Christopher said, “We are living with rats, pigeons and bed bugs in the centre. Everyone I know has bites.

“There’s a hole near the sink on the second floor where the rats come in, about ten or twenty feet near where they make food I saw a rat.”

Mitie has expanded its empire into other immigration services.

From May 2018, it took over a ten-year contract worth “an estimated £528 million” from fellow outsourcer Tascor.

The “escorting” work includes security on charter flights booked for mass deportations. It also guards detainees who are removed on scheduled flights and transports people between facilities.

This close-knit relationship between outsourcer and state in immigration was solidified under Tony Blair’s government. It bought together Labour’s zeal for privatisation and obsession with clamping down on asylum seekers, opening Yarl’s Wood, Brooke House and other centres.

Getting ‘value for money’

Wrecking people’s lives can be expensive. Fortunately for the Home Office, Carlson Wagonlit (CWT)—owned by a US conglomerate—has been helping it cut down on its costs since 2004.

Its deportation contract—worth £5.7 million—was renewed in 2017 and will last until 2024.

A report by the Independent Inspector of Borders and Immigration from 2015 describes how cost-cutting is at the centre of its business model.

Access

Outsourcer Tascor and CWT “had access to a Best Value Calculator (BVC)” that had been “developed jointly” to “check and consider travel options”.

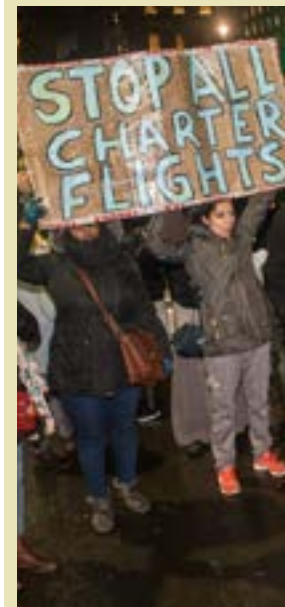
Tascor services have since been handed over to Mitie (see left).

“CWT enters the details of each booking, whether received directly or via Tascor, into a BVC,” the report said.

Detention

This takes into account “variables such as the cost of different ticket types, as well as representative detention and escort costs for different dates or routes”.

And then “CWT provisionally books the cheapest option identified by the BVC”.



IN BRIEF

Support fight at Brogan's Cafe

WORKERS AT Brogan's Cafe in Swindon walked out on Monday over low pay and working conditions.

The Brogan's Workers Union said, "Bosses have repeatedly mistreated staff & maintenance responsibilities.

"We had no other option but to strike. Our demands were simple—end zero-hour contracts, pay living wage, repair kitchen dishwasher and union recognition."

Trade unionists should raise solidarity for their fight.

●Donate to their strike fund at bit.ly/BrogansStrikeFund

Harrods strike to secure better pay

SECURITY GUARDS and CCTV workers at posh people's shop Harrods in west London were set to strike on Saturday.

The Unite union members are fighting over pay and working conditions.

They plan further walkouts on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday of next week and on 4 and 7 March.

Strikes can bag workers pay rise

BAGGAGE HANDLERS at London Heathrow Airport were set to stage a four day strike over pay from Saturday.

The Unite union members are demanding that subcontractor Global Baggage Solutions Ltd pays them the London Living Wage of £10.75 an hour.

They held a four day strike at the beginning of the month.

Engineers' pay fight in Kilmarnock

AROUND 185 workers at Mahle Engine Systems in Kilmarnock, Scotland, could be heading for strikes over pay.

Talks between the Unite union and bosses collapsed last week. A ballot for strikes is expected to open on 28 February and run until 14 March.

Meanwhile, bosses at Darcast Crankshaft in Birmingham have agreed to talks after workers threatened strikes.

The Unite union members are fighting for higher pay.

Strikealoo line in fight over timetable

STRIKES COULD be coming on the London Underground this week over plans to change timetables.

RMT union members on Barkerloo Line are set to walk out for four days from Friday after a 95 percent vote for action.

The union says that the "unworkable" changes will mean their members are put "under intolerable levels of personal stress".

HEALTH SERVICE



HEALTH CAMPAIGNERS protested outside Leeds General Infirmary on Saturday of last week. It was part of a national day of action against funding cuts and privatisation called by Keep Our NHS Public

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Workers fight Labour council's plan for cuts

by SARAH BATES

WORKERS IN Tower Hamlets, east London, are redoubling their efforts to fight back against a Labour council determined to carry out brutal attacks.

Council bosses tried to use legal action to block ballots for strikes against its "Tower Rewards" programme, which would slash workers' severance and redundancy pay.

The council was poised to take the NEU union to the High Court last Friday, but withdrew its challenge at the eleventh hour.

It argued that strikes by school workers would cause financial hardship to parents and lead to an increase in "anti-social behaviour".

The results of the NEU ballot weren't released, as

Unison's John McLoughlin

Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.

The Unison union was also threatened with legal action over the specifics of its ballot.

Some 2,200 of its members at the council and schools are voting on strikes, with the results out next week.

Unison branch secretary John McLoughlin told Socialist Worker, "When the council threatened the law that seems

to have galvanised people's moods."

John said that "all of the indications" showed strong support for fighting back. "We've had a series of votes—and the votes against Tower Rewards have remained consistently high," he said.

"It's shocking to us that a Labour council is seeking to change our contracts when the workforce rejected them.

"Although we got the council to get rid of a number of changes, they want to cut our severance pay.

"It's a signal they'll keep making more cuts and getting rid of people on the cheap."

Council bosses are threatening to sack and re-engage workers on new, worse contracts on 13 April. But if workers vote for strikes it could see united action before then.

Celebrate resistance with Socialist Worker this May Day

May Day is a chance to celebrate working class solidarity against the bosses and resistance to oppression.

Every year Socialist Worker produces a special supplement of May Day greetings from our readers in trade unions, colleges and campaigns. Make sure to get yours in by **10 April**

- 1 column ad: £30
- 2 column ad: £55
- 3 column ad: £95

Make cheques out to
Sherborne Publications Ltd

Socialist Worker,
PO Box 71327,
London SE11 9BW
020 7840 5656

mayday@socialistworker.co.uk

UNION UNION

'We need to learn French lessons on how to fight'

HUNDREDS OF delegates from across Britain joined debates at the Unison union's women's conference in Bournemouth last weekend.

The impact of Labour's general election defeat was tangible.

Unison general secretary Dave Prentis said, "It is only Labour in power that will end austerity."

But when delegates spoke about organising to resist Boris Johnson's government, they

were well received. Speaking on the threat to the NHS, health worker Janet Maiden said to applause, "We need to take French lessons on how to fight back."

York local government worker Julie Forgan spoke on women and the climate crisis.

She argued, "The trade unions could be part of mobilising for a sustainable world where the planet and working class people were put first".

ROYAL MAIL

Gate meetings build ballot

POSTAL WORKERS across Britain were set to hold a day of mass gate meetings on Tuesday of next week as they prepare a national strike ballot

Workers in Royal Mail are in a long-running battle to halt a major attack on their jobs and working conditions.

The national strike ballot by the CWU union is set to run between 3 and 17 March. CWU

members at several Royal Mail workplaces are also asking for regional strikes as bosses push ahead with attacks.

The union called action off last year after bosses got a high court injunction against a previous ballot.

Workers have to deliver another strong vote for strikes—and be prepared to defy the law if necessary.

OBITUARIES

Keith Chadwick 1947-2020

WITH THE sudden and unexpected death of Keith Chadwick, Burnley & Pendle Socialist Workers Party (SWP) lost a vital and much-loved comrade.

Keith was at the heart of political activity in the north west of England for nearly 40 years.

His contribution towards making socialism, trade unionism and anti-racism a part of everyday life here has been immense.

An engineer by trade, Keith spent his entire life in that industry, working for different firms in East Lancashire where he made many lifetime friends. He broke with his



Keith Chadwick

conservative background to join the SWP in 1983.

He saw the need for opposition to Margaret

Thatcher's attacks on unions and the working class.

Having made that commitment, he remained a dedicated member of the SWP for the rest of his life.

He never lost sight of the need for activity that connected with a wider audience.

Being political meant discussion, but for Keith it also meant getting to picket lines and town centre petitions, speaking up at public meetings and going on demonstrations.

He always booked the coach and secured trade union donations.

He played a major role in pushing back the fascist British National Party in Burnley and was a stalwart supporter of Stand Up To Racism.

He campaigned for the

rights of the Palestinian people.

Kind, enthusiastic and with a great sense of humour, Keith never lost his belief in the possibility of a better world.

He made a real difference in the fight to win that world—and he will be greatly missed.

**Richard MacSweeney
Burnley and Pendle SWP**

■WE ARE sad to have lost Keith who was a great and loveable friend.

He was the equalities officer and a long-serving member of the Burnley Unite branch and its predecessor unions.

These are the National Society of Metal Mechanics, Tass, MSF, and ASTMS.

Keith represented the

Branch and spoke at the Tass union conference.

He supported many trade union and socialist causes.

They ranged from the Miners' Strike, the Warrington print strike, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and other anti-war campaigns, to opposition to racism and fascism.

Keith was arranging a delegation from our branch to go over to support the Westex carpets strikers.

And he was organising support for a protest at the Cop26 climate change summit in November in Glasgow.

Keith was a Marxist socialist and trade unionist who fought for what he believed in and was not deterred.

**Peter Billington, Secretary,
Burnley Unite Branch**

OUTSOURCING

Bosses can't beat us say traffic wardens

by TOMÁŠ TENGEY-EVANS

TRAFFIC WARDENS in Hackney, east London, were gearing up for a protest at outsourcer Apcoa's headquarters on Friday this week.

The demonstration will mark the end of a two-week strike by Unite union members over pay and health and safety.

They are demanding the subcontractor Apcoa pays them £15 an hour and improved sick pay.

Workers rallied outside Hackney council offices in Mill Street on Wednesday and Thursday of last week.

Isaac, a Unite member, told Socialist Worker, "We went with flags, leaflets and banners—there was a lot of noise and they knew we were there."

"We let them know that they cannot put us down."

Suspend

Isaac added that a protest at the Apcoa headquarters will mean "everybody will see us, including the boss of the company".

The workers, who currently earn the London Living Wage of £10.75 an hour, say they are struggling to meet the cost of living in the capital. Isaac said, "We want



CONFIDENT ON the picket line

PICTURE: SASHA SIMIC

higher pay and better conditions of service.

"How can you work at a company for over 25 years and earn so little an hour?"

"It doesn't make sense with all the profits we're getting in for the people at the top."

Apcoa's parent firm recently took out a loan of over £350 million. The credit ratings

agency Moody's reports that part of the loan will be "used to fund a £75 million distribution to shareholders".

Its shareholders are private equity firms Strategic Value Partners and Centrebridge Partners.

Hackney Labour council should dump the company and take the work back

in-house. Trade unionists must support the strike and raise money in their union branches.

●Join the protest at Apcoa headquarters—Friday 21 February, 11am, Wellington House, 4-10 Cowley Rd, Uxbridge UB8 2XW
Workers' names have been changed

HEALTH

Strikers telling the truth to students about St George's

SECURITY GUARDS at St George's medical school in south London—who have held a series of strikes—planned a day of action on Thursday this week.

The UVW union members are fighting to be brought back in-house from subcontractor Noonan.

This week they were set to be at St George's open day, letting prospective students know the truth about what kind of university St George's really is.

UVW said, "All the security guards are asking for is equality and yet St George's is still despicably justifying outsourcing them to a private contractor."

"This ensures they are excluded from the St George's community and receive the worst terms and

conditions the law will allow. "There is no excuse for a two-tiered workforce and prospective students deserve to know the truth."

●ELIOR WORKERS, the contract caterers for Nottingham University Hospitals' patients, visitors and staff, are starting an industrial action ballot.

The Unison union says workers have lost out on £1,500 a year following their outsourcing from the NHS.

Unison regional organiser Dave Ratchford said, "This is an utterly shameful situation. Our members are repeatedly recognised nationally year after year as providing a service of excellence."

"They have worked hard in the NHS and feel they have been sold down the river."

CIVIL SERVICE

Threat of the sack for a leading activist in the PCS

ACTIVISTS IN the PCS union are preparing a campaign in defence of leading rep Paul Williams.

Bosses at the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) have threatened Paul, a member of the PCS's national executive committee, with compulsory redundancy.

It comes during a long-running dispute during which Paul has organised and led national strikes.

DVSA bosses have spent years trying to get rid of Paul, first launching a grievance against him in 2016, which they were eventually forced to drop in August 2018.

Yet in July that year they announced a "reorganisation" in Paul's workplace that put him at risk of redundancy in February last year.

Paul has since applied for 23 jobs in DVSA over the past year but has been repeatedly blocked or rejected. He says recent job offers have involved demands that he reduce his facility time, and even that he must agree to hold no union posts or positions.

He now faces a meeting set for Thursday of next week where he could be assessed for compulsory

redundancy. PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka has told bosses that if they don't halt the meeting, and appoint Paul to one of many vacancies, the union will launch a defence campaign.

Paul said, "It is clear that I am being victimised for my union roles and my record in defending members."

●Send messages of support to Midsbargaining@pcs.org.uk

■WORKERS AT Natural England, the government's advisor for the natural environment, are balloting for strikes over pay.

The members of the PCS union say they have had minimal pay rises over ten years, and that their services are chronically underfunded. The ballot began on Monday and is set to end on 9 March.

■CLEANERS AT HMRC tax offices in Liverpool and Bootle are re-balloting for strikes in their long-running battle over pay.

The members of the PCS union are demanding that outsourcer ISS pays them a living wage of £10 an hour, and have already held several strikes. The ballot is set to end on 2 March.

EDUCATION

Newham fights academies

WORKERS AT two schools in Newham, east London, stuck together for two days last week.

NEU union members at St Bonaventure's and St Michael's schools are taking action against a planned Multi Academy Trust.

Some strikers thought the best way for a quick resolution was to escalate to three days strike every week. Others are worried about how relations in the school are being affected.

The issue of NASUWT teachers being asked to cover work of striking NEU colleagues was taken up by

Dominic Byrne, an NEU exec member. He promised to inform NASUWT and stop this going on.

Miriam Scharf

■STUDENTS AND workers held an angry protest at Goldsmiths, University of London, on Friday of last week. The action called for no cuts at the university and opposed bosses' "Evolving Goldsmiths" restructure scheme.

Nearly 600 people have signed a statement calling on bosses to halt the scheme.

MANUFACTURING

Don't roll up carpet battle

CARPET WORKERS in West Yorkshire are pushing for a new ballot for strikes to keep up the fight against low pay.

Westex carpets workers in Cleckheaton went back to work on Monday after over 12 weeks of an indefinite strike because of the Unite union's failings.

It came as workers rejected a 2.4 percent pay offer.

A letter from the union strongly implied workers had to accept the pay offer or face the possibility of victimisation.

One Unite union member told Socialist Worker that the

vote was "overwhelming".

"There were just nine people in favour, and they filled out their ballot paper after reading the union's letter," he said.

Workers are frustrated that Unite failed to reballot.

Anti-union laws say a mandate for strikes have to be renewed after six months.

Another law says that during the first 12 weeks of a strike workers are protected from "selective dismissal". But unions can reballot to renew this protection.

Unite should immediately reballot workers for strikes over pay.

BIN WORKERS

Three strike ballots could mean action on the bins

BIN WORKERS at two boroughs in London could walk out over pay and allegations of bullying.

Around 120 refuse depot workers in Bexley and 250 bin workers in Tower Hamlets were set to finish voting in ballots for strikes on Friday.

Unite union members in Bexley, south London, are angry that they earn £4 an hour less than colleagues in the neighbouring borough of Greenwich.

They work for the outsourcing giant Serco on a contract to the Tory-run council.

Unite union members in Labour-run Tower Hamlets in east London are owed up to £9,000 each in

holiday pay arrears by the subcontractor Veolia.

■UNITE HAS said that it could ballot around 180 bin workers on the Wirral, Merseyside, over pay.

Talks over the 2019 pay claim between the union and subcontractor Biffa broke down.

As well as a failure to make a reasonable pay offer, Biffa management also announced that they intended to move workers from weekly pay to monthly pay, without consultation.

Workers have no confidence in Biffa paying them correctly, with serious mistakes being made on a regular basis under the current payroll.

CLIMATE CHAOS SPARKS FLOODS

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

THE DAMAGE caused by the floods across Britain has exposed the total failure to provide for people in danger.

Climate change makes storms and floods more likely—yet the Tories are abandoning whole towns.

A record number of amber and red flood warnings were issued across Britain as a result of Storm Dennis.

This came just days after Storm Ciara hit.

Three people are thought to have died as result of conditions related to flooding and rough seas.

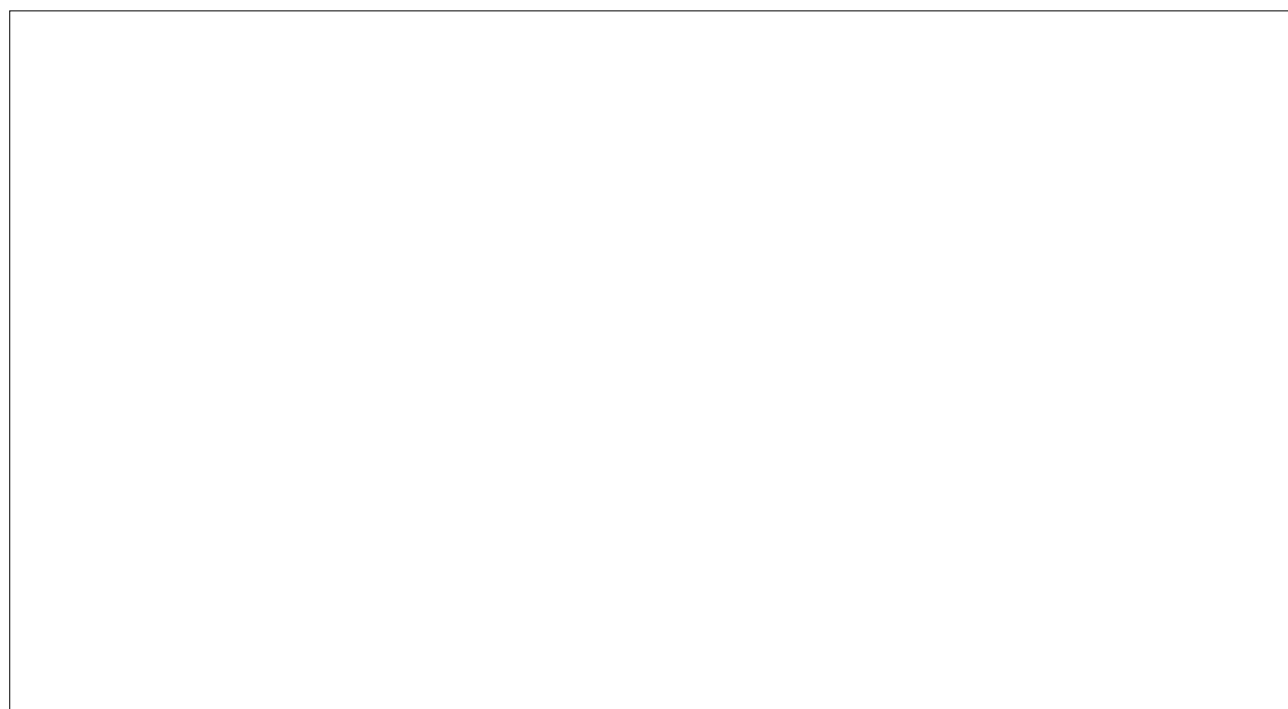
Thousands of people had to be evacuated from their homes.

Force

South Wales felt the full force of the storms and the town of Pontypridd was one of the worst affected.

After the River Taff burst its banks, up to a thousand homes were damaged, roads were blocked and people were trapped in their homes.

Around 600 people were



EMERGENCY SERVICES take residents to safety, in Nantgarw, Wales

evacuated. Ian Thomas from Blackwood, near Pontypridd, said flooding there “seemed a lot worse than usual” and an “extreme” amount of rain fell.

Pontypridd resident Marianne Owens told

Socialist Worker that the flood defences haven’t been updated since they were installed in the 1970s.

“The community has rallied to help those affected,” she said.

“But there doesn’t seem to be any serious organisation and not many resources, such as sandbags, provided to help protect against flood water.”

Working class towns such as Pontypridd have seen

little investment in all areas including flood prevention. Time and time again some of Britain’s poorest areas are being hit with devastating flooding.

And they are often left

to deal with the aftermath with little help from the state. George Eustice, the new Tory environment secretary, said, “The nature of climate change means extreme weather events such as this weekend’s deluge are becoming more common.

“We have to live with that fact”.

Effective

But the government is failing to take effective action over climate change. And for those whose homes have been damaged by the floods this comment must have felt like a slap in the face.

Only a few months ago floods hit South Yorkshire, resulting in hundreds of people having to evacuate their homes.

Some are yet to return. The infrastructure to deal with these events desperately needs to be put in place as quickly as possible or suffering for ordinary people will get worse.

More online
For more on climate, go to www.socialistworker.co.uk

AUSTERITY

Tories’ budget cuts have made extreme weather events more destructive

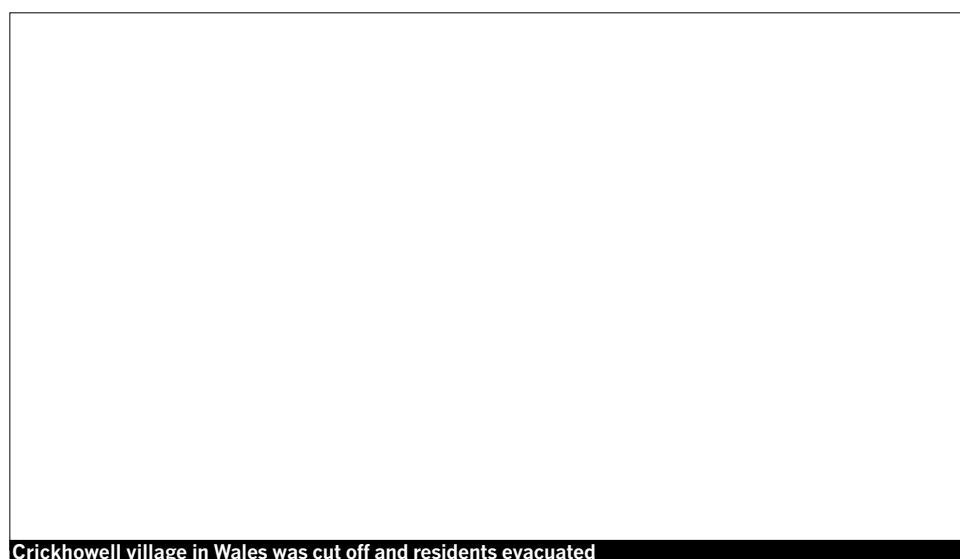
YEARS OF cuts and a lack of effective planning means floods are more destructive.

Funding for flood defences in England was cut in 2010 after David Cameron became prime minister.

In 2009, the Environment Agency (EA) said it would need at least £1,000 million a year, plus inflation, to ensure proper protection for communities.

And the acceleration of climate change means that now the figure will be higher.

But instead of listening, the Tories cut the Flood



Crickhowell village in Wales was cut off and residents evacuated

Defence Grant Aid budget from £670 million in 2010-11 to £576 million in 2012-13.

Storms

After the storms of 2013-14, which saw extensive flooding in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, the government increased the funding and the budget for 2019-20 is £815 million.

This is still well short of what the EA said was needed. And staff numbers have been slashed. The EA employed 13,027 staff in 2013. Today the figure is 10,713.

All this means that some

places are repeatedly hit by floods, the damage is worse—and they may even have to be abandoned.

Last year, EA chair Emma Howard Boyd laid out a three-pronged strategy to create “climate-resilient places”.

But she warned, “In some places, the scale of the threat may be so significant that recovery will not always be the best long-term solution.

“In these instances, we will help communities to move out of harm’s way.”

Tory inaction could see villages and towns wiped from the map as the climate crisis rages.